From head and throat to her heard and diaphragm there was a "painful thread" inside her. It was not mere "fancy," since "a vessel broke somewhere and I bled in a stream as I might at a month [monthly period?] but it was arterial blood and was red not dark or viscous." While this bleeding did not relieve the "thread" it calmed her enough "to bear quietly the scene that through the door I did not see but could hear -- ... the two nights of suffering before the Sunday on which my husband died." The husband lay all that time before her door on a mattress and "it seemed that every breath he drew dragged hard upon this thread." She had hoped that "this thread of life imaginary or real was broken with his life," but it was not. Now she wonders whether she "can ever have any relief from it in applying to you."

(A Large Correspondence)

The nature of the correspondence preserved in the women's file indicates that such writing was not consistently intercepted. The replies to the old lady and her daughters, or as often to the officials regarding concerns the women had expressed to correspondents in England and the United States, indicate that many of their letters made it out, even when the contents were "disturbed" or "disturbing" or, occasionally, "incoherent" and "disconnected."

Perhaps it made a difference that the women's correspondents, principally an in-law in England and the daughter (herself a physician) of family friends in the United States, were alert to interruptions in writing and complaints about conditions. The women themselves, especially the old lady, reacted quite vigorously to any interruption in letters from the outside, or in the regular gifts (sometimes whole trunkfuls of clothing) on which, to judge by their photograph, they depended for their relatively high standard of living and which they managed to use to great effect.

The widow of the husband's only brother wrote Dr. Clark on June 3, 1894 that "I receive from them letters which are very rational & nice in feeling, and they express admiration for the Institution which shelters them." From another letter to the Medical Superintendent, dated March 28, 1908, it seems that the women had complained of "want of privacy at night." The in-law enquired about the cost of a "double-bedded room." Later the old lady complained about their move to Cottage A, although one of her daughters, who Dr. Clark